WORLD AGRICULTURAL WEATHER HIGHLIGHTS

February 11, 2000

1 - UNITED STATES
In January, beneficial precipitation eased long-term drought in the Ohio Valley and Southeast. In the West, much-needed precipitation fell from northern and central California to the central Rockies. Farther south, however, areas from southern California to western Texas remained extremely dry, resulting in further declines in range, pasture, and dryland crop conditions. Unfavorably dry conditions also persisted throughout most of the Plains, western Corn Belt, and lower Mississippi Valley, raising concerns about a lack of moisture for winter grains and the availability of moisture during the upcoming planting season. In central Florida, a late-month cold snap dropped temperatures to near or slightly below 32 degrees F, but had few adverse effects on citrus and cool-season vegetables. Farther north, a substantial snow cover protected the eastern Corn Belt's winter wheat from occasional bitter cold.

2 - SOUTH AMERICA
A majority of the summer crop areas in central Argentina and southern Brazil received near- to slightly above-normal January rainfall. The moisture stabilized yield potentials for reproductive to filling corn and reproductive soybeans. However, below- normal rainfall stressed summer crops in east-central Argentina (Entre Rios, extreme northeastern Buenos Aires, and portions of southern Sante Fe), Uruguay, and parts of southern Brazil (southern Mato Grosso do Sul and northwestern Parana). Temperatures in January averaged above normal in southern Brazil and near to slightly above normal in central Argentina.

3 - EUROPE
In January, below-normal precipitation in western and southern Europe reduced soil moisture. In southern Spain and Portugal, dry, unseasonably cold weather slowed winter grain development. Near-normal precipitation and unseasonably mild weather favored dormant winter grains in northeastern Europe. Cold weather during the latter half of January potentially caused citrus damage in Greece and Italy.

4 - NORTHWESTERN AFRICA
Dryness intensified in Morocco and western Algeria, stressing winter grains in the vegetative stage. Below-normal rainfall in eastern Algeria and Tunisia caused crops to rely on diminishing soil moisture reserves to sustain normal crop development.

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(More details are available in the Weekly Weather and Crop Bulletin. Subscription information may be obtained by calling (202) 720-7917.)

5 - FSU-WESTERN
In January, overwintering conditions remained favorable for dormant winter grains. Near- to above-normal precipitation boosted moisture supplies in Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Baltics. A protective snow cover existed in areas that experienced extreme cold in late January. A warming trend since early February provided favorable overwintering conditions, but melted protective snow cover.

6 - SOUTH ASIA
Scattered, mostly light showers swept across winter wheat and rapeseed areas of north-central India, aiding local rainfed crops and reducing the need for irrigation. Other winter crop areas, including central Pakistan, need moisture for the rainfed portion of the crop.

7 - EASTERN ASIA
Dormant winter wheat withstood cold January weather across the North China Plain. A light snow cover in the northern winter wheat areas provided additional protection. Precipitation was seasonably light across the North China Plain. Above-normal January rainfall increased moisture supplies for winter rapeseed in the Yangtze Valley and winter crops in most of the extreme south. Below-normal rainfall was reported in Guangxi.

8 - SOUTHEAST ASIA
Near-normal January rainfall maintained adequate moisture supplies for main-season rice in Java, Indonesia. Near- to above-normal rainfall favored oil palm in peninsular Malaysia, but near- to below-normal rainfall prevailed across Sumatra. In January, mostly dry weather prevailed across Indochina, but mid-January to early-February rainfall slowed rice fieldwork in central and south-central Vietnam. In the eastern Philippines, above-normal rainfall from mid-January to early February boosted moisture supplies for second-crop grains, but caused some flooding.

9 - SOUTH AFRICA
Beneficial rain covered the corn belt through early January, but was followed by a drying trend that persited into early February. The drying trend reduced moisture for reproductive summer crops. By early February, irrigation demands had risen in coastal sugarcane areas and in orchards and vineyards in Western Cape.

10 - AUSTRALIA
During January, cool, showery weather in the east slowed summer crop growth. Locally heavy rain in Western Australia increased moisture reserves for summer crops and grazing. In early February, sunny skies aided cotton and sorghum development, but a heat wave stressed livestock in the southeast.